

VZCZCXRO8848
RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHMOS
DE RUEHKU #5163/01 3511332
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 171332Z DEC 05
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2203
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 KUWAIT 005163

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

NEA/PPD (AFERNANDEZ, PAGNEW, CWHITTLESEY), ECA/PE/C/CU
(SROUSE), R, ECA (DPOWELL)

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OEXC](#) [KPAO](#) [SCUL](#) [OIIP](#) [XF](#) [KU](#)
SUBJECT: NEW ORLEANS ALL-STARS THRILL KUWAIT

Ref: A) KUWAIT 4846
B) KUWAIT 4281 (and previous)

¶1. SUMMARY: On Thanksgiving Day, November 24, 2005, the New Orleans All-Star Brass Band performed to a packed hotel ballroom in downtown Kuwait to thank the people and Government of Kuwait for their support following Hurricane Katrina. The Charge d'Affaires welcomed and thanked the Kuwaiti public and dignitaries who attended the event, including Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Minister for Planning. Both the Foreign Minister and a representative of the Red Crescent Society received plaques of appreciation. The Foreign Minister thanked the United States and the American people for their friendship and assistance to Kuwait. Speaking in Kuwaiti Arabic dialect, Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour thanked Kuwait for supporting the hurricane-stricken Gulf coast on behalf of a four-governor delegation attending the concert. The band's lively performance left the audience exhilarated and appreciative of the need to support the rebirth of New Orleans and its cultural heritage. END SUMMARY.

A Thanksgiving Event

¶2. Following the devastation wreaked by Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf coast of the United States earlier this year, the Government of Kuwait offered \$500 million in aid and the Kuwait Red Crescent Society collected donations amounting to about \$2.8 million from private individuals to assist hurricane survivors (refuels A and B). In recognition of Kuwait's extraordinary pledge of support and gift of private donations, on November 24, 2005, the Embassy presented a broad cross-section of Kuwaiti society with a Thanksgiving Day concert at the Sheraton Hotel. The Band was in Kuwait as part of a tour across North Africa and the Gulf to thank these states and their people for their support following hurricane Katrina.

¶3. The diverse audience included government officials, intellectuals, writers, artists, and members of the Fine Arts Society, NGO leaders, women activists, educators, youth, journalists, and business leaders from the financial sector. American service men and women and a delegation of four U.S. governors also enjoyed the Thanksgiving Day performance by the New Orleans All-Star Brass Band.

¶4. The most notable Kuwaiti guests included the Foreign Minister of Kuwait, Sheikh Dr. Mohammed Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, representing the Government of Kuwait, Dr. Masouma Saleh Al-Mubarak, Kuwait's Minister of Planning & State Minister for Administrative Development (also Kuwait's first woman Minister and Parliament Member) and the Deputy Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer. A group of about 30 American service men and women, based in or transiting through Kuwait originating from the

Gulf coast states, attended the concert as did a delegation of four U.S. governors: Haley Barbour of Mississippi, Jennifer Granholm of Michigan, Sonny Perdue of Georgia, and Kathleen Sebelius of Kansas.

15. The PAO opened the program and the Charge d'Affaires delivered welcoming remarks before presenting appreciation plaques to the Foreign Minister and to the Kuwaiti Red Crescent Society representative (for the text of the Charge's remarks, please visit: http://kuwait.usembassy.gov/pr_11242005.html).

Foreign Minister: A Century of Strong Relations

16. After the presentation of plaques, the Foreign Minister offered the following remarks:

BEGIN TEXT: Minister Masouma Al-Mubarak, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. I am really honored and pleased to be here today on behalf of the Kuwaiti people to acknowledge this plaque of friendship from the American people.

Governors, since you are in a place of the world in which story telling is a part of the tradition, let me tell you a story.

Once upon a time, a small peaceful country was ravaged by a foreign invader. The invaders did not spare women and children. It was so horrible, that the good people around the world did not just stand still, they decided to do something and to rush in and to save this community. If you guessed that the small country was Kuwait, you guessed

KUWAIT 00005163 002 OF 003

right. If you guessed that the good people were the Americans, you guessed right again.

But, the invader was not Saddam Hussein. It was the measles. And the troops were not led by general Schwarzkopf, but were led by a nurse by the name of Eleanor Calverly. And, the year was not 1990, it was 1906, almost a century ago to this date. The Kuwaiti people to show their appreciation and gratitude to the American people-and let me remind you, in 1906 there was no oil in Kuwait, Kuwait was a very poor country then-so they passed the tin cup around, collected donations and they built the first American hospital in the Gulf. It was only half a mile away from here, actually. And, you can see it and I hope that you will be able to see it tomorrow. This is really the genesis of the Kuwaiti-American relationship. It is more than a century old.

Governors, the Kuwaiti-American friendship has always been strong. We have always been your ally, a strong ally, even when it was not fashionable sometimes to be a friend to the Americans. But we always took pride in our relationship with you. Sometimes God works in a mysterious way. Katrina was an opportunity for the Kuwaiti people to express their gratitude and appreciation and assure of reciprocity for what you have done over the years for the Kuwaitis. So again, I am extremely delighted and honored to be here today with you and I can only say that may God bless our two countries. Thank you very much. END TEXT.

Mississippi's Governor: Thank You Very Much

17. Following the Foreign Minister's remarks, the Governor of Mississippi, Haley Barbour, thanked the Kuwaitis for hurricane relief support in surprise remarks to the audience. The Governor spoke on behalf of a delegation of four governors who attended the concert while visiting American service men and women in Kuwait and Iraq. Governor Barbour's speech lifted the crowd to its feet as he spoke in

Kuwaiti Arabic dialect, concluding, "We thank you very, very much." The remarks clearly moved the audience and also received positive feedback in the press.

All-Stars to Kuwait: "You are Wonderful!"

18. Following Governor Barbour's remarks, the All-Star band marched into the hall, playing their classic New Orleans-style jazz, and began a 70-minute long performance. From their entry to their encore, the band energized the crowd through the authenticity, quality, and uniqueness of their performance. The band dedicated the song "What a Wonderful World" to the people of Kuwait. The All-Stars wrapped up their concert with an encore performance of the "When the Saints Go Marching In." The Kuwaitis rose to their feet for the last number and the encore. Throughout the night, the crowd that included a colorful mix of dishdashas, hijabs, and western dress, tapped their feet or snapped their fingers to the beat. Many danced in the aisles, which is very demonstrative for conservative Kuwaitis.

"America Thanked Kuwait's Generosity with a Jazz Hurricane"

19. All major Kuwaiti media outlets, including press, local television, and satellite television, even the blogosphere, covered the event. Monthly cultural and social magazines also covered the concert, but their reports are not included in this cable. Press coverage:

Arabic Press:

11/23/05

Al-Watan, p. 9, 1/6 page, 3 photos, circ. 65,000

11/25/05

Al-Anba, tease on front page, back page, page, 3 photos, circ. 40,000

Al-Rai Al-Aam, tease on front page, continued on p. 23, 1/6 page, 1 photo, circ. 70,000

11/26/05

Al-Anba, p. 5, 1/2 page, 2 photos, circ. 40,000

Al-Seyassah, p. 4, 1/2 page, 4 photos, circ. 45,000

Al-Watan, p. 2, 1 page, 5 photos, circ. 65,000

11/27/05

Al-Watan, p. 53, 1/3 page, 3 photos, circ. 65,000

English Press:

11/26/05

Arab Times, p. 25, page, 2 photos, circ. 40,000

Kuwait Times, p. 4, page, 3 photos, circ. 35,000

KUWAIT 00005163 003 OF 003

The Daily Star, p. 3, 1/6 page, 1 photo, circ. 15,000

Internet/weblogs:

11/25/05

Kuwait Embassy webpage:

http://kuwait.usembassy.gov/pr_11242005.html

Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) webpage:

<http://www.kuna.net.kw/home/print.aspx?Language=en&DSNO=790636>

A Kuwaiti weblog (for reference and not endorsed by the Embassy):

<http://jewairasboudoir.blogspot.com/2005/11/a-11-star-thanksgiving.html>

Television:

n:

Kuwait Television and Al-Rai TV (Kuwait's private satellite channel) covered the event, airing snippets of the concert as well as short interviews as part of their news programs on November 25, 2005.

Culture that Connects

¶10. COMMENT: The Embassy is grateful for having had the opportunity to put together this successful program. We recommend the New Orleans All-Star Band for future programming. The band members are talented and easy to work with. The Embassy thanks ECA for organizing this high impact and moving project. END COMMENT.

TUELLER